



PROGRESS REPORT NO. 43

TO: Helen Bottcher – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - via Email

FROM: Marko Adzic – Teck American Incorporated (Teck)

DATE: February 9, 2010

FILE NO: 1-773180-000

RE: Upper Columbia River (UCR) Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study
(RI/FS) - Progress Report No. 43 Month Ending January 2010

Pursuant to Paragraph 39 of the June 2, 2006 Settlement Agreement (Agreement), the following is intended to provide a summary of the activities completed during the past month in compliance with the aforementioned Agreement. It is also intended to provide a brief summary of pending and on-going activities.

Analysis of large-size fish (i.e., >30 centimeters) approved by EPA for analysis has been completed and the raw data is in the process of being validated. Teck will continue to work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize the compositing and homogenization scheme for large fish within focus areas in which catch rates did not meet requirements as outlined within the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Teck identified an error in the Fish Tissue QAPP (i.e., the method provided for analyzing fluoride is incorrect). Teck raised this issue with EPA and will continue to work with the EPA to resolve the issue. As instructed, with the exception of sucker species, medium-size fish have been composited and chemical analyses initiated. Teck will continue to work with the EPA to finalize the compositing scheme for medium-sized sucker species, and all small-size fish. We trust that this will be completed in the very near future as holding times for certain analytes (e.g., mercury) are approaching (i.e., end of March 2010).

Validated surface water data for the October 2009 sampling event and associated draft field sampling report were made available during this past month. Data analysis is presently underway and will be reviewed with EPA in the near future. In the meantime, planning efforts for the second and third sampling events are proceeding. For example, we are developing a detailed sampling schedule, taking into account the holidays, and we will be sharing this EPA in the very near future so that oversight planning activities can proceed accordingly and in parallel. I wish to confirm that we requested that the Canadian Government confirm their continued support in permitting us to collect surface water samples in Canada for the 2nd and 3rd sampling events.

Technical meetings involving EPA, the Participating Parties, the Government of Canada, and Teck were held in Seattle in January to discuss 2010 studies for sediment and white sturgeon. Although EPA and Teck are in agreement on the overall approach for both sediment and sturgeon, there were several specific topics identified that require further discussion. These topics include:

- the method for collecting porewater samples,
- whether sediment samples should be sieved prior to analysis,
- the use of mussel toxicity tests and oligochaete bioaccumulation tests as part of the sediment program, and
- which acute and chronic sturgeon toxicity tests are needed to assess the risk to early life stages of white sturgeon.

Following the January technical meetings, EPA and Teck have held initial discussions on several of the topics listed above. We anticipate further discussions with EPA and the broader Government Team to resolve these outstanding questions within the near future. We are working hard to ensure that both the sediment and sturgeon programs proceed in 2010.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 509-892-2585.